



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 13, 2014

CONTACT: DEVIN STONE
615.313.4707 (OFFICE)
DEVIN.STONE@TN.GOV

TENNESSEE RECOGNIZES JUNE 15 AS WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS DAY IN TRIBUTE TO THE SAFETY AND DIGNITY OF SENIORS

NASHVILLE, TN – Each day the state’s elderly population grows, and with it, the heightened risk of abuse, neglect and financial exploitation upon this vulnerable group. In recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), Gov. Bill Haslam has issued a proclamation acknowledging the day and urging Tennesseans “to work to prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation of elderly Tennesseans and to raise awareness and prevention around all people affected by this devastating crime.”

Sunday, June 15, is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and the Tennessee Department of Human Services is working to do its part to raise awareness toward preventing abuse of the elderly. The Tennessee State Capitol cupola will be illuminated in purple, the nationally recognized color for elder abuse. Tennesseans are encouraged to wear something purple to help build awareness of this special day on June 14 and 15.

“Abuse of the elderly is not acceptable,” said DHS Commissioner Raquel Hatter. “Protection of the elderly starts at prevention, and we must all do our part to care for the elderly and act in their best interest.”

In partnership with state agencies including the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability (TCAD) and the Tennessee Vulnerable Adult Coalition (TVAC) events are being held across the state to educate on elder abuse and spread awareness. Most importantly, these groups are encouraging the public to 1) know the signs of elder abuse and 2) report suspected instances of mistreatment.

Signs of abuse might include:

- Bruising, especially on the torso or head
- Frequent injuries, with the excuse of “accidents”
- Threatening, belittling or controlling behavior by the caregiver that you see
- Unusual weight loss, malnutrition, dehydration
- Unsanitary and/or unsafe living conditions: bugs, soiled bedding and clothes, no heat or running water
- Sudden changes in the vulnerable adult’s financial condition

“We all have the responsibility to take a stand against elder abuse,” said DHS Assistant Commissioner of Community and Social Services Pat Wade.

- more -

CITIZENS PLAZA, 15TH FLOOR
400 DEADERICK STREET
NASHVILLE, TN 37243
615.313.4700

In 2013, the department's Adult Protective Services (APS) program investigated approximately 8,198 reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults. Still, elder abuse is an underreported crime because victims are often isolated, vulnerable to the abuser or unable to speak for themselves. Many victims are reluctant to report abuse because they may feel ashamed and embarrassed, particularly if a family member is the abuser. Therefore, it is important to know the signs of abuse, and do your part to report it.

Contact Adult Protective Services (APS) to report suspicion of neglect and/or abuse at 1-888-APS-TENN (1-888-277-8366).

For more information, visit http://www.tn.gov/humanserv/adfam/afs_aps.html or <http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/index.aspx>.

###